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# THE ARMY WE NEED

BY MAJOR RICHARD STOCKTON, JR.

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AMONG all the confusing problems which confront our legislators in the readjustment of our national affairs to the new peace time conditions, none presents greater difference of honest opinion than does the question of our national defense.

That such should be the case is possible only owing to the extreme indifference of the public to things military, and to the lack of military appreciation of civilian thought. Only a failure to comprehend certain absolute facts permits any question as to the nature of the land forces which our nation must have, and until these truths are understood, any laws which may be passed in regard to our army or citizen soldiers will probably be unsatisfactory, inadequate and possibly harmful from both the civil and the military viewpoint.

Among the basic principles upon which we must base our future military organization are these ten:

1. With or without a League of Nations, the day of war has not passed.
2. The United States is unalterably opposed to a large standing army, but, nevertheless, desires reasonable and adequate preparation.
3. The American citizen desires to secure a maximum of military protection but to give a minimum of military service.
4. To fight a powerful nation when we are ready, after a year of preparation during which strong allies engage the enemy's full attention, is very different from fighting such a nation alone.
5. Hence, our army, whatever its form, must be able to take the field immediately that war is declared, not several months or a year thereafter, and must be able to give us adequate protection during the period in which such additional forces as are needed are being made ready.
6. In any given science the amateur, who devotes only a small

part of his time thereto, as a class is not as well versed or as efficient as the professional who makes the science his life study.

7. The first essential of a good army is teamwork, system and unity of standards and command.

8. The interjection of half a hundred semi-independent States, State legislatures and governors in an army for national defense tends to destroy unity, teamwork and command, multiplies the probability of undesirable political influence, and in the case of citizen soldiers adds to the handicap placed upon their efficiency by their civil interests and lack of time for military training.

9. Soldiers must be trained before going into battle.

10. As long as our officers' pay, rank and ability to live well and support their families depend on the size of the Army and the various branches thereof, it is unreasonable to expect these human beings to regard military legislation from an absolutely unprejudiced viewpoint.

From these facts it will be found that there is but one general military policy to be deduced.

The day of the peace fanatic, who eloquently assured us that it was "impossible for another great war to take place" ended in August, 1914, and will be revived only when those of us have passed away who recall how utterly ridiculous the claims of these theorists became at that time. The staunchest supporter of the League of Nations does not claim that it will do away with war. President Wilson himself makes no such claim, and his opposing political party takes the attitude that it will indeed serve as a cause for war. As we have learned in our civil governments, power alone can enforce law. As civil wars and revolutions constantly prove, even a well organized government, with volumes of written laws, cannot prevent war when there arises a strong enough opposing sentiment. If, then, a well organized government is not able to prevent interior strife, we certainly must expect that a rather weakly bound league will prevent strife only as long as there is no sufficiently powerful party which disagrees with its mandates.

The conclusive proof of the past four years as to the impracticability and absurdity of the theories of the ultra-pacifists makes it absolutely unnecessary to argue further that the day of universal peace is not yet at hand. Hence, as there will be war, we must realize that our country may again be involved therein, and must be ready to meet the issue when it is forced upon us.

The opposition to a large standing army, but the desire for protection, with a minimum of service, is so universally accepted in the United States as to require no supporting word whatever. It is only necessary to consider the effect upon our military policy. If public sentiment is so opposed to a large standing army, by elimination, our legislation must provide for a small one. What, then, governs its size? What are the peace time necessities for professional soldiers? Briefly, they are as follows: The Regular Army must be large enough to (a) garrison our colonies, (b) protect our southern border, (c) furnish small expeditional forces for minor campaigns, (d) guard and care for our military property and equipment, and (e) do such training and administration of other forces as cannot be handled by the officers of those forces.

An army of a size adequate only for the above mentioned duties manifestly will not be large enough to give the nation the preparation for war that it desires. It must be supplemented by some other force—and there is only one other kind of force known—a citizen soldiery. Fortunately, moreover, a citizen soldiery is the one force that meets the requirement of preparedness with a minimum of service. In consequence, we can reach only one conclusion—that our military legislation must provide for a small standing army, supplemented by a large, efficient citizen soldiery.

It is characteristic of the American public to see effects, rather than causes. It sees, today, that we raised an army of over 3,000,000 men, trained them, equipped them, transported a large proportion of them to Europe and with them added the strength that turned German victory into defeat. Because we did this with apparent success, and without undue effort or sacrifice the public has a tendency to think that in any war that may come, we can raise an army from our untrained or partially trained citizens, put them in the field and win the war. They overlook the fact that three powerful Allies, and many minor ones, were doing our fighting for us, while we spent a year in getting our army ready to put into the field. Had we alone been compelled to fight a powerful nation like Germany at the same time that we were building great cantonments, selecting and drafting men, training officers, and manufacturing ma-

terial, we would have learned a very sad lesson. Should we have been invaded by a strong army during our year of preparation, the very preparation would have been almost impossible and defeat would have stared us in the face.

We may not always have powerful allies to fight while we are getting ready, and, therefore, we must be able to put a force into the field immediately on the opening of hostilities. It is thought that few who know of the marvelous mobilizations of Europe will question the statement that we should have at the very least 500,000 combatant troops ready to mobilize in a period that would be counted in hours after declaration of war—and that we should have another 500,000 men able to be mobilized in a period of days thereafter.

At first thought this may seem impracticable if we are to have a small standing army, but, as a matter of fact there is one, and just one, sure way in which it may be accomplished, i. e., by making the Regular Army a small, quickly expandable, skeletonized unit at peace strength, with a carefully planned and tried out system of instantaneous conversion to a completely equipped and trained war strength.

In order that we may have a force of at least 500,000 men ready to move immediately on the outbreak of war, one of the first essentials is that we maintain the divisional organization in peace. To keep the standing army small, these divisions may be maintained at a peace strength of from one-third to one-half of the war strength, with both officers and men of a trained citizen soldiery actually assigned to regiments and companies or corresponding units, ready to join the colors the instant that the necessity should arise. Not only must these citizen soldiers be trained and assigned to organized units *before* an emergency arises, but their arms, clothing, equipment and all the *impedimenta* of war must be with the unit, only awaiting the arrival of the citizen soldier who is to use them.

Under that system, we can have a small Regular Army and yet be ready to meet an enemy on the outbreak of war. Assuming that the Regular Army strength be fixed at from 200,000 to 275,000 men, organized into from 15 to 20 skeleton divisions, when war should be declared, presto!—we almost equal the dreams of William Jennings Bryan.

Overnight sufficient trained officers and men to give us the same number of divisions at war strength, change their clothes, pick up their arms and march off with the "outfits" in which they have been inactive members for some time.

How these citizen-soldiers would be trained will be considered later. Nor is it overlooked that such a plan would require a thorough, decentralized system of paper work, some time and effort on the part of the officers charged therewith, and probably the localization of units, i. e., the securing of all men for any certain organization from the same locality. We cannot carry any plan for adequate preparedness to success without thought and work and careful preparation and practice in peace. That such a plan can be carried out, however, is an actual proven fact. Moreover, it is the only way in which we can meet the popular demand for a small standing army combined with the ability to protect ourselves at the outset of war.

The millions of men mobilized by Germany and by the Allies, and in fact the three million which it became necessary for the United States alone to put into the field, are ample indication that the 500,000 men above provided as our immediately available force would not be sufficient for our needs. In a short time any powerful enemy would be increasing the forces sent against us, and we would be compelled to meet the increase. If we keep the Regular Army around the quarter million mark in peace, even when brought to war strength it will not be sufficient to meet our needs. For the next 500,000 or so men which we must have we can turn to the National Guard—but to a very different Guard from that of the past. The war proved two things about the Guard, namely that some of the finest fighting material in the country belonged thereto and, second, that owing to its impossible and faulty system, the Guard contained a very large proportion of inefficients, as to officers, as to men and as to units.

Other things being equal, it is absurd to expect an amateur soldier, on part time and with many civil interests, to become as efficient as a professional one. There are numerous exceptions to this rule, in the form of men who love the work so much that they devote most of their time thereto, and who make up in enthusiasm what they lose

through lack of time. These exceptions, however, are not numerous enough to make it advisable to rely on a National Guard whose required training consists solely of some fifty evening drills per year and a week or ten days in summer camp. No citizen soldiery so trained can be counted upon to furnish our second 500,000 men within a reasonably short time after the outbreak of war.

That fact, however, does not prevent us from finding in the National Guard the very force that we are looking for. At the present day a large number of both the officers and men of the Guard are soldiers trained in war. In the future our Guard must be composed entirely of men who have had good previous training, which may have been secured in the late war, or under the training system hereinafter mentioned. The basic fact is that while we cannot train soldiers in the time which is available for the Guardsman, we can keep previously trained men in condition with that amount of work. Hence, in the new National Guard, it must be a requirement for either commission or enlistment that the applicants had a previous thorough military training.

It is a well recognized military principle that a force composed of the armies of a single nation has the advantage over the forces of two or more allies. This old principle was proven once again in the past war. In that fact lies much of the impossibility of placing reliance on a National Guard which is controlled largely or in part by some half a hundred different States. Such control increases the disadvantages of a small number of allies, and increases it many-fold. In fact, under the opposing whims of two score and ten governors, State legislatures and adjutant generals, the National Guard is an absolute impossibility as an efficient military force.

It is beside the question to argue that the War Department and the Regular Army have done this or that wrong. If the War Department has done wrong there is hope that its errors may be corrected, but there is no hope of correcting the errors of fifty little war departments, in fifty States, under fifty semi-independent governments.

We must have but one army—the *army*—and it must be controlled by but one government, the United

States Government. In that army there is plenty of need for all *good* officers and men, whether they be Regulars, Guardsmen or Training Camp officers, and there is no reason why all should not be members thereof, and be well treated therein.

We would not for a moment consider crossing the ocean on a ship whose officers and crew were composed of cow-boys who had never before seen the ocean. We would not travel on a railroad manned by chorus men. We would not send our loved ones to a butcher when they required a serious operation. By all means then, we should not trust ourselves or our youths in the most dangerous of all pursuits under untrained officers and supported by untrained companions. If even we are careless as to the additional deaths which such a policy must result in, we must consider the fact that an army composed of untrained men is likely to fail in its purpose of victory and be useless as a means of preparedness. When our soldiers go into battle they must know the art of war, and, to be ready to protect us at the outset of hostilities, they must be trained in time of peace.

It will have been noted that the entire army which has been planned herein has depended upon the "trained citizen-soldier." The men who are to bring our small regular force from peace to war strength are "trained citizen-soldiers." The men who are to furnish the officers and enlisted personnel for the new Guard are "trained citizen-soldiers." From whence are these to come?

Needless to state, to secure a sufficient flow of trained citizens for these purposes we must have universal compulsory training of all male citizens on their reaching a certain age. All the opposing branches of our service agree that we must have such training if we are to have any reasonably efficient preparedness. Furthermore about 4,000,000 young men, and a like number of families of young men will attest the fact that military training is not only valuable for the purpose of preparedness, but also is of inestimable value to the individual in his civil life and, in consequence, to the nation.

On reaching a certain age, which the General Staff has set at nineteen years, all male citizens not exempted for good reasons, should be required to undergo a period of



intensive training. No one has suggested that the period required for this purpose should be less than three months, and it is believed that three months was selected as a concession on the part of the military authorities and not because any officer seriously considered that it would be adequate for an untrained man to become a trained private soldier. However, assuming that three months will suffice, each year we would train about 650,000 young men. At the conclusion of this training these men would be enrolled in one of three forces, (a) as an inactive member of the Regular Army, (b) as a member of the National Guard, or (c) as a member of the general, unorganized reserve. It is in this manner that the enlisted men of the trained citizen-soldiery would be secured.

Not only do men require training, however, but so, also, do units and the officers who must command units. Furthermore, these units and their officers must have practice at war strength, and must have manoeuvres of large tactical organizations under conditions approximating those of war. This is absolutely necessary if our army is to function properly as a fighting force when war is suddenly thrust upon it. The only way that such practice in handling war strength units could be secured under a skeleton army policy would be to have the citizen soldier take his individual training during his first year, and, when enrolled as an inactive member of the Regular Army, or as a member of the National Guard, to require that he join the colors for a short period of manoeuvring and large unit training in the following year. In this way, not only would the officers be practiced in handling their units at war strength, but the army would actually be mobilized at stated intervals, and there would be removed all obstacles to a smooth and rapid mobilization in time of war.

There remains the problem of securing and training the officers. In the initial plans for the organization of the single army which this nation should have, use should be made of all officers of the Regular Army, the National Guard or the Reserve Corps who have demonstrated, or who can demonstrate that they are fitted to act in the rank which they may hold. Thereafter, we could rely upon the remaining sources of officers, i. e., West Point, the private military schools, the ranks of the Regular Army, and to these

we could add those young men who after completing their period of compulsory training, volunteer, and are found fit for additional training as officer candidates.

For years the infantry, cavalry and artillery have fought each other, each trying to show the need for increases in its arm, for the simple reason that an increase in the arm meant a corresponding increase in the number of officers, and therefore promotion for those concerned. In the same way the Regular has always contended that the Army must be a closed corporation as to commissions, and that no other kind of officers, no matter how worthy, should be permitted to be commissioned in the army except in the lowest grade—because every outsider placed other than in the lowest grade would mean that those under him were just that much further from promotion. Finally, the army always has, and always will be a strong supporter of a large standing force, not only because such a force means preparedness, but because it means more officers, and more rank for those already in the service.

These facts do not reflect upon the army officer, but rather on the nation. The truth is that these increases of troops not only mean promotion to the officer, but they determine his rate of pay. Unfortunately, moreover, the rate of pay to an officer of the army is so low compared with that of men of corresponding attainment in civil life, that, in duty to himself and his family, every question which is likely to affect his pay becomes a vital and a paramount one. At the present time the army officer is miserably underpaid and the question of the army's size has become a question which will determine whether or not he can give his family the bare necessities of their station of life. Naturally, then, we must expect the Regular Army man to be prejudiced in favor of a large army. It may not be conscious, but it cannot possibly be other than so.

The solution of this lies in two very simple changes. First, we should make the pay of our officers equal to that of civilians in corresponding stations of life, so that at the lowest rate they could meet their obligations and support their families, and, second, we should make the rate of pay dependent on the length of service of the officer, and not upon his rank or upon the size of the army or any arm thereof. Then only the hollow honor of the insignia worn

upon the shoulder would depend upon the increase or decrease of any arm or upon the size of the standing forces. The welfare of all those persons whom an officer holds dear would be assured, and would no longer prejudice him in his thought toward the military policy of the nation.

Again, the Guardsman and the Training Camp Officer have resented the distinctions made between the officers of these various branches of the service. If our officers are to have the unity and teamwork that is essential to a good military force, not only must we have but one army, but all its officers must be commissioned in but one army.

Today there are thousands of temporary officers—Guardsmen, National Army men and Reservists—who are very anxious to get into the Regular Army and to have permanent service, and there are also a large number of Regular officers who desire to try their luck in civil life. At present it seems doubtful whether or not there will be a place for the temporary officer in the Regular service. On the other hand, the Regular hesitates to try civil life because he feels that, should it not be a success, he will be unable to get back into the army. To overcome this situation, to make our officers stop their partisan quarrels and to secure unity in the military service, every competent officer, be he Regular, Guardsman or Reservist, who so desires, should be commissioned an officer of the United States Army, on exactly equal terms. Then each officer should be given the privilege of applying for either active or inactive status, in accordance with their individual desires, providing, of course, that no officer now on active status (Regular Army) would be placed on the inactive list unless he so desired and *vice versa*. Thereafter, officers should have the privilege of making such application at will, and their requests should be granted where compatible with the best interests of the service. In such a manner, the Regular Army officer who desires to try his fortunes in civil life would be able to do so, with a chance of being able to get back to active duty should later events make it necessary, and the temporary officer would be able to assume an active status and remain thereon should there be any need for his services. Congress, of course, would limit the total number of officers on active status, by its annual appropriations for the support of the army.

Several military bills are now before Congress, but none of them can meet our national requirements. Where they give preparedness, they are contrary to our national sentiments—where they meet our national sentiments, they fail to give us a military force that is ready to protect us at the outbreak of war.

For instance, take the "General Staff" bill. It provides for a large standing Army which is contrary to our national traditions, and almost impossible of enactment. Again, while it provides for universal training it does not provide for any enrollment of those trained in a manner that would make them available to march the instant that war is declared. On the contrary, it leaves the question of selecting those to fight, of assigning them to units, their mobilization, their equipment and all the various details of forming the army, to be done after the emergency has arisen. In a word, it is a "Big Army" bill yet falls short of a "preparedness" measure.

The ten facts which have been given as affecting our military legislation are hardly subject to question. From them we can evolve only one military policy for the United States; viz.,

First: We must have Universal Military Training.

Second: Our standing army must be a small force, organized by divisions, at Peace strength.

Third: The Standing forces must be capable of instant conversion to a war strength of at least half a million men, by the addition of previously trained, enrolled and assigned citizens.

Fourth: As a second line, available very shortly after the emergency arises, we must have a National Guard, under absolute Federal Control, and composed of officers and men who have been trained previous to their enrollment in this force.

Fifth: The question of an officer's livelihood must be separated from dependence on the size of the army or its branches.

Sixth: The source of friction between officers of the Regular Army, the National Guard, and the Reserve, must be reduced by commissioning them all in one army.

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